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MANAGEMENT AUDIT
of the
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

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OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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by

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C. Erwin Piper
City Administrative Officer

August, 1975

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OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Dogs in Recreation Areas

Because of more intensive use of City parks and recreation areas by City residents, free-roaming and on-leash dogs increasingly interfere with public enjoyment of leisure-time activities at these facilities. Although free-roaming dogs constitute a violation of the leash law, recreation personnel seldom request enforcement by the Department of Animal Regulation.

Dogs and dog feces harbor diseases transmissible to man. They present an especially serious health hazard to young children because of their tendencies to play in and with dirt. In addition, dogs bite, damage property and wild life, and cause accidents. Some people fear dogs and nearly everyone attempts to avoid contact with dog feces.

Recommendation:

- a. Review the propriety of existing law, policy and practice which have the effect of permitting both free-roaming and on-leash dogs in parks and recreation areas giving due consideration to the most recent medical evidence available, particularly with regard to the health hazard to young children who may come in direct contact with dogs or dog feces.
- b. Consider prohibiting all dogs from heavily used recreation areas and establish enforcement procedures.
- c. Maintain statistics on all dog bite and other dog related incidents that occur in City parks and recreation areas and submit periodic reports to the Board.

2. Activities of Recreation Personnel

Some recreation personnel are reluctant to perform such tasks as setting up tables and chairs, picking up broken glass or stringing a volleyball net when assistance is not immediately available.

Recommendation: Inform recreation personnel in departmental training programs and through daily supervision that the Department's role is one of service to the public and on occasion they may be required to perform recreation support activities.

3. Housing Project Recreation Centers

Grouping the eight recreation centers at housing projects into a separate organizational unit known as the Housing District has not produced the anticipated improvement in services at these centers.

Recommendation:

- a. Discontinue the Housing District established to administer housing project recreation centers.
- b. Transfer responsibility for each housing project recreation center and its assigned personnel to the appropriate geographic District of the Recreation Branch.
- c. Delete the position of Recreation Supervisor established to supervise the Housing District.

4. Restrooms

Restrooms are not always open for public use when needed, particularly on weekends.

Recommendation: Insure that restrooms are open to the public when use of facilities warrants that they be available.

5. Exposition Park Maintenance

Inefficiencies result from various governmental agencies performing grounds maintenance activities at Exposition Park. Past negotiations to transfer the City's grounds maintenance responsibilities to the County have been inconclusive.

Recommendation: Resume negotiations with County officials to transfer the grounds maintenance activities of the City at Exposition Park to the County.

6. Observatory Custodial Services

Custodial maintenance at the Griffith Observatory needs improvement.

Recommendation: Transfer the supervisory responsibility of the four custodial positions assigned at the Griffith Observatory to the Director of the Observatory.

7. Floor Finishing

The nature and timing of floor finishing activities are more closely related to the maintenance and refurbishment of buildings and especially to painting than to grounds maintenance.

Recommendation: Transfer the floor finishing crew from the Grounds Maintenance Division to the centralized painting unit in the Construction and Repairs Division.

8. Golf Grounds Maintenance

Deterioration and destruction of turf and loss of greens have been costly to the golf program both in lost revenue and expense of rebuilding or repairing damaged greens.

Recommendation: Develop and conduct a continuing training program in turf and greens maintenance for all golf maintenance personnel.

9. Golf Starters

The operational responsibilities of the Principal and Senior Golf Starters are not clearly defined.

Recommendation:

- a. Assign responsibility for golf starting activities at each of the three major golf complexes (Griffith Park, Sepulveda and Rancho Park) to a Principal Golf Starter.
- b. Take appropriate action to reallocate the position of Principal Golf Starter assigned to the Roosevelt Golf Course in Griffith Park to the class of Senior Golf Starter.

10. Golf Hand Carts

During the 1973-74 fiscal year, the Department received nearly \$42,000 from the rental of golf hand carts. The Golf Manager estimates that revenues could be increased by 20 percent if a deposit were required on the handle to the golf cart refundable on its return. This would encourage golfers to return the carts precluding the use by other golfers without paying the rental fee. The Department has considered turning over the operation of golf hand cart rentals to golf professionals. This would result in the loss of substantial revenue to the Department.

Recommendation:

- a. Require a deposit on the handle of rental golf hand carts to be refundable upon its return.
- b. Continue Department operation of golf hand cart rentals.

11. Golf Watering Systems

There are insufficient personnel with the appropriate skills to perform needed repairs on golf course watering systems. Only one Caulker and Repairer is available. This position is assigned to the five courses in the Griffith Park complex. The number of Caulker and Repairers is not adequate to meet the needs at the Rancho Park and Sepulveda golf complexes. Gardener Caretakers are now utilized to perform emergency repairs but are unable to meet the needs of these systems.

Recommendation: Take appropriate action to reallocate two positions of Gardener Caretaker to the class of Caulker and Repairer, one each to be assigned to the Rancho Park and Sepulveda golf complexes.

12. Board Policies

On occasion, Commissioners have questioned matters before the Board only to be told that what has been done or is being proposed is due to a Board policy of which they are not aware.

Recommendation: Prepare and present to each member of the Board an updated compilation of all Board policies and keep the compilation up-to-date.

13. Status of Capital Projects

Information on the status of all capital projects is not available in a form that can be readily used by management. The Contract Administration Division prepares a detailed report showing the progress of each project which it is administering, but this does not cover all of the projects for which the Planning and Development Branch is responsible.

Recommendation: Periodically prepare a summary report for submission to the Board on the status of all capital projects showing progress, problems, and available funds, if any.

14. Contract Administration Procedures

The Planning and Development Branch has been reorganized to direct more effort toward project management and expedited completion of projects. Improved procedures for contract administration are being developed but much remains to be done.

Recommendation: Instruct the Planning and Development Division to expedite its efforts to develop improved procedures for contract administration.

15. Review of Construction Plans

There is insufficient technical staff review of plans. This results in problems which will remain indefinitely unless corrected by change orders or other costly methods. Also, there is presently no systematic survey of new facilities after they have been in use to find out what problems are present and could be avoided in the future.

Recommendation:

- a. Intensify the technical review of plans utilizing construction inspectors and construction and maintenance personnel to a greater extent than at present.
- b. Conduct systematic surveys of new facilities after they have been in use for a reasonable period of time in order to determine what problems are present and could be avoided in the future.

16. Property Acquisition

The Board is not being formally advised concerning real estate offered for donation or sale for park and recreation purposes but rejected by staff.

Recommendation: Submit a report for Board action on all offerings of real estate for park and recreation purposes.

17. Stores Activity

Certain problems continue in the Stores Division which were identified in the Management Systems Division report entitled "Preliminary Study of Central Stores Operation."

Recommendation:

- a. Direct the Management Systems Division to recommend solutions for unresolved problem areas identified in its report entitled "Preliminary Study of Central Stores Operation."
- b. Direct the Stores Division, with the assistance of the Management Systems Division, to implement the recommendations.

18. Budget Estimate

The Department's Budget Estimate is submitted very late to the Mayor, resulting in reduced time for review by the City Administrative Officer. Much of the effort of Department personnel in preparing the budget estimate is of limited use in that ultimate budgetary limitations usually preclude any substantial increase.

Recommendation: Provide Branch and Division personnel with appropriate parameters and procedures for preparing budget requests to permit submittal of the budget on schedule.

19. Accounting Systems

There has been inadequate attention to the review, development, and enforcement of accounting systems and procedures. This has resulted in discrepancies in handling funds for the Recreation Center playground and sports accounts and the self-sustaining classes. Auditors have been diverted from their regular audits to resolve problems that could have been avoided if adequate procedures had been available and enforced. A lack of written procedures has made training of new personnel more difficult.

Recommendation: Direct the Chief Accountant to:

- a. Undertake a review of the Department's accounting systems and procedures and prepare appropriate documentation for use by Accounting Division and other personnel.
- b. Work closely with Branch and Division heads to see that accounting procedures are enforced.

20. Auditing

There is no formalized plan for auditing activities. In addition, the Department's auditors report directly to the Chief Accountant.

Recommendation: Instruct the Director of Administrative Services to:

- a. Supervise the auditing activity.
- b. Develop an annual audit plan indicating the audits to be made in priority order.

21. Fees

Fees charged for special services provided by the Department have not been reviewed and updated on a periodic basis as required by Executive Directives (No. 26-old Series and No. 12-new Series). As a result, the revenue received may be less than it should be.

Recommendation: Comply with the Executive Directive requiring submission of a report on fees to the City Administrative Officer each year.

22. Policies and Procedures Manual

The Personnel Section of the Department's Policies and Procedures Manual is out of date and supervisors throughout the Department are without current information on personnel practices. This problem has been recognized and an update has recently been started.

Recommendation: Assign a high priority to updating and distributing the Personnel Section of the Department's Policies and Procedures Manual.

23. Safety and First Aid Training

Training in safety and first aid has not been provided to all employees who require it. Inexpensive suggestions for improved safety made by the City's Safety Engineer have in many cases not been implemented. The Personnel Division, which is responsible for coordinating safety matters, should devote more attention to this area.

Recommendation:

- a. Instruct the Personnel Division to arrange for expanded safety and first aid training.
- b. Implement recommendations of the City's Safety Engineer to the extent that funds are available.

24. Overtime Accumulation

The Department Personnel Resolution provides that "No employee shall be allowed to accumulate more than 40 hours of actual overtime work (equal to 60 hours of accumulated overtime). . . ." A number of employees have accumulated more than 60 hours in violation of this provision.

Recommendation: Enforce the provision in the Department Personnel Resolution limiting the amount of overtime worked that may be accumulated.

25. Mail Service

Recreation centers send out thousands of flyers announcing quarterly programs using first class mail. These mailings qualify for a second class postal rate. In addition, some procedures for preparing material for mailing are questionable.

Recommendation: Review departmental mailing procedures to insure that all economies are being realized.

26. Communications

Matters directly affecting or relating to a Branch, Division, or Section often bypass the individuals in charge.

Recommendation: Insure that all matters affecting each Branch, Division, and Section are channeled through the persons responsible for such organizational units.

27. Organization Chart

The Department's current organization chart does not reflect existing personnel assignments and organizational relationships.

Recommendation: Base the Department's organization chart upon the budget adopted by the Board to reflect the actual distribution of personnel authority and organizational and supervisorial relationships.

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